

SENATE No. 1209

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

James B. Eldridge

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying resolve:

Resolve establishing a special commission on inmate and prisoner suicides.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	
<i>Jennifer E. Benson</i>	<i>37th Middlesex</i>
<i>Cory Atkins</i>	<i>14th Middlesex</i>

SENATE No. 1209

By Mr. Eldridge, petition (accompanied by resolve, Senate, No. 1209) of Eldridge, Atkins and Benson for legislation to establish a special commission on inmate and prisoner suicides [Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security].

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Eleven

Resolve establishing a special commission on inmate and prisoner suicides.

1 Resolved, Resolved, that there shall be a special commission to study the
2 prevention of suicide amongst prisoners in Massachusetts correctional facilities. The commission
3 shall consist of the commissioner of the secretary of the Executive Office of Public Safety or the
4 secretary’s designee who shall serve as chair; the Secretary of the Department of Mental Health
5 or the secretary’s designee; one person to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one person
6 to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; four persons to be appointed by
7 the Governor, one of whom shall be a representative of a legal advocacy organization that has
8 expertise with issues related to prisons and prisoners, one of whom shall be a representative of a
9 community organization or public agency that works with prisoners and their families, one of
10 whom shall be a representative of an organization that specializes in suicide prevention and one
11 of whom shall be a representative of an organization that represents Massachusetts corrections
12 officers. Each member shall serve without compensation.

13 The commission shall review the state of suicide prevention programs in
14 Massachusetts’ correctional facilities and develop model plans, recommend program changes,

15 highlight budget priorities and recommend best practices that could be utilized to reduce
16 instances of prisoner suicide and attempted suicide. The commission shall: (1) examine and
17 evaluate the state of jail and prison suicide prevention policies in the commonwealth; (2)
18 examine and evaluate suicide prevention training for correctional facility staff personnel in the
19 commonwealth; (3) develop recommendations on ways in which correctional facilities can
20 improve intake screening and bookkeeping; (4) examine and develop recommendations on
21 methods by which correctional facilities may improve identification, referral, and evaluation of
22 individual suicide risk; (5) provide recommendations for improving communication between
23 detention facility staff and arresting and/or transporting officers, as well as between detention
24 facility staff and potentially suicidal inmates; (6) examine and develop recommendations on
25 methods by which correctional facilities may improve housing designated for inmates identified
26 as suicidal; (7) provide recommendations for improving observation and treatment plans for
27 inmates identified as suicidal; (8) provide recommendations for improving suicide intervention;
28 and (9) examine and develop recommendations for how correctional facilities may improve or
29 establish practices of postmortem notification, reporting, and mortality-morbidity reviewing.

30 The commission may hold public hearings to assist in the collection and
31 evaluation of data and testimony.

32 The commission shall submit its findings and recommendations relative to jail
33 suicide prevention, together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry those recommendations
34 into effect, by filing the same with the clerks of the House of Representatives and Senate, the
35 House and Senate committees on Ways and Means, the Joint Committee on Public Safety and
36 Homeland Security not later than March 1, 2012.